
MEDIA ADVISORY

Louisiana
Department of State



Al Ater
Secretary of State

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ATER ANNOUNCES HE WILL NOT SEEK THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

BATON ROUGE, LA – Secretary of State Al Ater announced today that he will not be on the fall 2006 ballot for Louisiana Secretary of State.

“While it is a tremendous honor to serve as Louisiana’s Secretary of State, two reasons prevent me from pursuing this office,” Ater said. “First, I feel that in order to maintain the integrity of Louisiana’s election system, and the high-level of confidence our citizens have in the voting process, it is imperative that politics play no role in the many challenging decisions we have ahead of us. Second, it is my opinion that this office should be independent of political party pressures, and therefore should be appointed in the future. In light of that, I feel that it would be hypocritical to either participate in the upcoming election or to seek the appointment, should the office become an appointed position.”

Secretary of State Ater, as chief elections officer, oversees all elections carried out in the state. Currently, the Secretary of State’s office is focused on taking the state’s election system to the next level, Ater said.

“I believe this office is vital to Louisiana; and the position of chief elections officer demands commitment, nonpartisanship and most of all trustworthiness,” Ater said. “In my opinion, the best way to continue to achieve fair elections is to separate this office from political forces, allowing it to function on a basis created to ensure that we maintain our voters’ trust.”

Two weeks ago, the agency began negotiations to finalize a contract that will introduce a uniform statewide voting system. In addition, Ater has plans to introduce new reforms and proposals in the upcoming legislative session, including making the office an appointed position.

“Now is the time for me to focus on the responsibilities of this office. We have a full agenda and I plan to see to it that we accomplish as much as possible during the remainder of my tenure,” Ater said.

Ater, a Ferriday native, served in the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1984 until 1992. In 2001, Ater joined the Department of State as First Assistant to Secretary of State Fox McKeithen, where he led the merger between the Department of State and the Department of Elections. He joined the Department of Insurance in July 2004 as Chief Deputy Commissioner with Robert Wooley. In 2005, he returned to the Department of State as First Assistant Secretary of State. Ater became Secretary of State in July 2005.

Ater will continue to serve as Secretary of State until the Sep. 30, 2006 special election is held. Following which, he will return to his family and his farming business in Ferriday, Louisiana.

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